

SANTA CLARA POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 71.1

PRISONER TRANSPORTATION: TRANSPORT OPERATIONS

ISSUED APRIL 2006

71.1.1 Searching Prior to Transportation

All prisoners will be searched by the transporting officer prior to being placed in a police vehicle.

Prisoners shall be searched each time they come into the transport officers custody, including to and from court appearances (if applicable).

71.1.2 Searching Vehicles Prior to Transportation

Officers shall thoroughly search their police vehicle prior to and at the end of their tour of duty.

Officers shall thoroughly search their police vehicle prior to and after they transport a prisoner.

All contraband or property seized from a police unit will be marked, tagged, and placed into an evidence locker. A report will be prepared and submitted for supervisory review.

71.1.3 Prisoner Transportation

Automobiles

Prisoners shall be properly restrained, and normally transported in the back seat of a patrol vehicle equipped with a safety barrier between the prisoner and the officer. The prisoner shall be placed in a position to allow the transporting officer the greatest degree of visibility and control of the prisoner. In most circumstances, the prisoner shall be placed in the rear, right-hand seat of the transport vehicle.

If there is more than one officer in the vehicle, the officer sitting in the passenger seat should position the prisoner in a place where the prisoner can be best observed, normally the left-rear seat. The positioning of the prisoner shall allow the prisoner the greatest amount of comfort while providing maximum security.

If a prisoner is being transported in a vehicle without a safety barrier, the prisoner should be restrained in the right front seat of the vehicle. In cases where two officers are present with this type of vehicle, the second officer should sit directly behind the driver, with the prisoner in the right rear seat.

At no time will members of dissimilar sex or age groups (adult/juveniles) be transported in the same patrol vehicle.

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Special Vehicles

The prisoner transport van maintained by the Department can be utilized in special circumstances. The vehicle is equipped with two separate holding compartments, allowing for transportation of adults/females/juveniles in the separate compartments. At no time will members of dissimilar sex or age groups (adult/juvenile) be transported in the same holding compartment.

Assistance to Others

Transporting officer(s) shall not stop to render law enforcement assistance along the transport route unless an extreme emergency exists. Should the officer(s) stop, an attempt shall be made to immediately contact the appropriate local agency, and advise of the emergency. Only when the risk to third parties is both clear and grave and the risk to the prisoner is minimal should the officer stop to render assistance.

The transporting officer(s) will only remain at the scene of an emergency until proper assistance has arrived.

Transporting officers shall not become involved in a pursuit, roadblock or other situation that might create a risk of harm to the prisoner.

71.1.4 Maintaining Visual Observation of Prisoners

The primary duty of the transporting officer is the safe delivery of the prisoner in his/her care. Other than the circumstance as discussed in [71.1.3](#), an officer should not lose sight of a prisoner or leave a vehicle containing a prisoner unattended. Officers should be aware that there might, on occasion, be diversionary incidents designed to distract an officer while outside parties are freeing a prisoner from custody.

During long distance transports, care should be taken when stopping for fuel and meals or for allowing the prisoners reasonable opportunities to use toilet facilities. Two officers should be used during the transport if fuel/meal stops are anticipated. Locations should be alternated and randomly selected. Normally, no stops will be made while transporting from the point of arrest to the booking or processing location.

71.1.5 Prisoner Communication

Prisoners' rights to communicate with attorneys, clergy, family and/or others will not normally be permitted during transports.

If special circumstances arise which, in the officers opinion, necessitates an exception to the above restriction, the officer may allow the prisoner to communicate with another person. It will be the responsibility of the officer to monitor any such communication and make a notation in his/her report.

71.1.6 Transport to Detention Facilities

Transporting officers will be aware of and follow the procedures at state institutions, forensic hospitals, mental health facilities, and county correctional facilities. The following policy will apply to all detention facilities:

The transporting officer will not enter a secure area or receiving area with his/her firearm, ammunition, knives, baton, asp, or chemical agent spray.

Restraints will only be removed when instructed to do so by the receiving officer.

The transporting officer will be responsible for the exchange of all necessary signatures and paperwork for the transfer.

71.1.7 Escapes

If a prisoner escapes while being transported, the transporting officer shall immediately notify the following persons:

- Communications (immediately),
- On Duty Watch Commander,
- Immediate police jurisdiction, and
- Surrounding police jurisdictions

The transport officer(s) shall submit the following reports:

- Police incident report,
- Memorandum, via chain of command, to the Chief of Police outlining the details of the escape,
- Any other reports as deemed necessary by the Watch Commander

71.1.8 Security Hazards

When bringing a high-risk prisoner into any court facility, the transport officer shall notify the presiding judge of the nature of the risks associated with the prisoner. The judge will make the final decision as to the use of restraints or special safeguards while in the court.